December 2009

President-Elect Barack Obama
Executive Office of the President
451 6th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear President-Elect Obama:

As you heard directly from voters during the election season, families across Ohio are increasingly anxious about health care and are eager to see the new administration and Congress keep their pledges to enact reforms that will ensure that every American has access to affordable and stable health insurance coverage and high-quality health care.

With rising premiums far out-pacing wages, everyone is feeling the effects. Family premiums for health coverage have increased 30 percent since 2001, while income has increased just three percent. Businesses that offer health insurance see it in their bottom lines, and family budgets are being strained by rising out-of-pocket costs. For the small businesses that can’t offer coverage and individuals who do not have coverage, the possibilities of obtaining coverage grow ever dimmer.

The recent downturn in the economy has compounded these problems. Chief among people’s economic worries are the health and well-being of their families. They fear not being able to take their children to the doctor or obtain the medications they need to stay healthy and take care of their loved ones.

Fixing the economy and reforming our health care system must be inextricably linked. Polling data collected prior to the election asked likely voters to rank policy ideas based on how effective they would be at improving the current economic situation, and the top two answers were reducing health care costs and providing health care to all Americans.

As we move into a new presidential administration and Congress, our leaders must work together to find common-ground policies to provide coverage to all Americans.
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We, therefore, urge President-elect Obama to make comprehensive health reform the top domestic priority in his administration and the one that he tackles first. Ohio’s children, businesses, seniors, people with disabilities and families are counting on action and his leadership.

Sincerely,

American Cancer Society (Ohio)
AXIS Center for Public Awareness
CareSource
Catholic Conference of Ohio, Department of Social Concerns
Cerebral Palsy Association of Ohio
Cleveland Rape Crisis Center
Coalition on Homelessness and Housing of Ohio
Contact Center
District Three, Ohio Nurses Association
May Dugan Multi-Service Center and
Multiethnic Advocates for Cultural Competence, Inc
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
Neighborhood Family Practice
Ohio Council of Churches
Ohio Association of Area Aging Agencies
Ohio Association of Community Health Centers
Ohio Association of Free Clinics
Ohio Association of Second Harvest Food Banks
Ohio Citizen Advocates for Chemical Dependency Prevention & Treatment
Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council
Ohio Empowerment Coalition
Ohio Jewish Communities
Ohio Nurses Association
Ohio Olmstead Task Force
Ohio Psychological Association
Ohio Society for Respiratory Care
Public Children Services Association of Ohio
Results (Columbus)
Toledo Area Jobs with Justice
UHCAN Ohio
United Clevelanders Against Poverty
We Are the Uninsured
Westland Ecumenical Community Food Pantry